

All of us have been listening on television about the big wild fire at Lake Tahoe. This bill would reduce overall funding for firefighting by \$14 million at a time when we are facing what is potentially one of the worst fire seasons in history. It cuts 125 firefighters, shuts down firefighter stations, and significantly reduces air tanker support. It would decimate preparedness efforts by failing to provide critical support for initial attacks, and could allow as many as 80 more wildfires to escalate. This would lead to larger, more damaging and much more expensive fires, costing in excess of \$20 million to extinguish.

This amendment halts hazardous fuel reduction projects without which there is little hope for reducing long-term fire costs and harmful impacts.

In our national parks, it cuts overall National Park Service funding by \$13 million, includes a \$6 million reduction below the President's request for the basic operational cost of the 391 units of the national park system.

It drastically impacts the President's proposal to hire 3,000 seasonal and 600 full-time park ranger positions.

For Native American programs, it rejects \$29 million for programs that have received bipartisan support. By cutting \$16 million out of Indian health care programs, this proposal would deny service to thousands of Native Americans.

It takes 4 percent out of the already struggling Indian education programs leaving even more Indian children without adequate education programs.

For the Environmental Protection Agency, it reduces a total of \$40 million for EPA. Funding for efforts to help local communities with repairs to their aging water and wastewater infrastructure, would be reduced by almost \$10 million from fiscal year 2007 enacted levels. This would mean that many communities would not receive the financial assistance they need to repair and improve water and sewer infrastructure.

Despite the fact that 76 million Americans live within 4 miles of a toxic waste site, the amendment cuts almost \$8 million from programs to clean up the Nation's most toxic and hazardous waste sites. It reduces the amount for restoration and protection of America's great water bodies, including the Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes, Puget Sound, and others. It would especially jeopardize the cleanup of toxic sediments in the lakes, and community efforts across this Nation to protect 28 estuaries.

For the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service the cuts here would be \$7 million for an agency which has already lost 600 staff positions since 2004. And means that many of our wildlife refuges today have no staff whatsoever because of the devastating cuts that have been imposed over the last 7 years.

It would perpetuate staffing shortfall trends and reduce public service by

taking funding out of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Forest Service. This amendment reduces funding for the non-fire portion of the Forest Service by \$13 million. Forces up to 100 employee layoffs and closures of more than 10 campgrounds while reducing fire improvement activities on several thousand acres.

It diminishes cooperative land conservation and forestry actions which serve thousands of nonindustrial private forest landowners.

It freezes research efforts and compels the closure of at least four labs.

So these are, I think, very substantial and important reductions that would adversely affect this bill. I have a great regard for the gentlelady. As much as I enjoy and appreciate her, I can't accept this amendment. I want her to know it is nothing personal, it is just that we have to do the job.

We are in a recovery mode here. That is what I tried to explain. The gentleman who talked about the \$16 billion, it wasn't \$16 billion, it was a 16 percent reduction in the funding for the Department of the Interior. This has had a devastating impact. We also had a 29 percent reduction in EPA and a 35 percent reduction in the Forest Service budget. All of these budgets have been hit hard. Only the Department of Labor has been hit worse.

What we are trying to do is stop this downward trend in the personnel in these agencies. The Park Service budget, 80 to 90 percent of the budget are for people. That is why we are so concerned about this. Without the people, the American people when they go to the parks are not going to have the kind of experience that they should have. That's why we have tried to stop this.

The Secretary of the Interior, he got it. I told him, I said you cannot succeed, Mr. Secretary, unless you get 100 percent of fixed costs covered in your budget for the Park Service, for the Fish and Wildlife Service, for the Bureau of Land Management, the Mineral Management Agency, and he did that. But we have to recover over a period of time.

Unfortunately, to make further reductions will take us longer before we can restore the services at our national parks, and restore service at our national wildlife refuges. This is a very well put-together bill. I just regret that these cuts are being offered. I think this bill should be accepted as it is. We have to go to conference, obviously we know that. So I rise in very strong opposition to this amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Chairman, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. JORDAN).

Mr. JORDAN of Ohio. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlelady for yielding me this time, and for bringing this fine amendment forward and for her work on fiscal responsibility in her time here in the United States Congress.

I want to make a couple of quick points here. First, the list that the chairman just went through, he kept using the term "cut." Let's be clear to the American people in particular that the gentlelady's amendment is not a cut, it is an increase of 4 percent. What the gentleman was referring to was the spending levels at 4.5 percent which the bill contains within it. All she is saying is let's increase 4 percent instead of 4.5 percent. Again, only in government-speak, only in Washington can that be termed a cut. She is not cutting at all. She is just saying let's not increase it quite as much.

A couple of other things we have heard in the course of the debate this afternoon which I think has been healthy. The chairman indicated that he wants to move on, we need to limit debate and get out of here. Look, 40 minutes on three amendments, 2 hours total on debate, on the most fundamental question, the most fundamental issue the United States Congress deals with: How we spend the taxpayers' money. So 2 hours debate on what level that should be is not too much debate. Frankly, we should have more on this fundamental question.

The other point that the majority party makes is, and again, I find this logic fascinating. Republicans spent too much, so we are going to spend even more. It is amazing that is the logic that the other side entails and brings forward in each of these appropriations bills.

Talking about the spending contained within this bill, let me just cite a couple of things.

The Commission on Climate Change, a brand new commission, \$50 million on the Commission on Climate Change, adaptation and mitigation, a new, additional study on global warming, as if we haven't had enough studies on that already. So \$50 million on that.

The National Park Service, \$199 million increase, 10.8 percent above last year.

National Endowment for the Humanities, \$19 million increase, 13 percent above last year.

Environmental Protection Agency, the Agency that the gentleman said that if it didn't get the right amount of funding, people would lose sleep over, \$361 million, or a 4.7 percent increase above last year.

And of course, my favorite, and I am sure the favorite of the American taxpayer, National Endowment for the Arts, a \$35 million increase, 29 percent above last year.

There is all kinds of additional government contained in this legislation. I am reminded of the old statement by our third President, Thomas Jefferson. He said: "When government fears the people, there is liberty. When people fear the government, there is tyranny." Now keep that statement in mind and ask yourself the question: If next week when we are back home on break and you are at some friend's business and someone walks up to the